

REMARKS

In the Action, Claims 1-3 and 6 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Biedermann et al. Claims 4-5 and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Biedermann et al. in view of Marnay et al. In response, Applicant has amended Claim 1 to more clearly distinguish over the prior art of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of record are requested in view of such amendments in the following discussion.

In relying upon Biedermann et al., the Examiner contends that the claimed blocking device is considered to be the ring-like portion 20 in combination with the upper, threaded screw socket 45 of Biedermann et al. However, Applicant's blocking device is a combination of ring (20) and screw-threaded socket (21). The differences between Applicant's structure and Biedermann et al. are best seen with reference to Figure 1 of the present application and Figure 2 of Biedermann et al. Reference is also made to Figure 2 of the present application. In this connection, Applicant's screw-threaded socket (21) is adapted to encircle a substantial portion of the spherical head (15) as well as a collar (23) of the ring (20). Applicant's claim 1 incorporates this precise structural limitation. By way of contrast, in Biedermann et al., the socket 45 does not encircle any portion of Biederman et al.'s spherical head 3. Additionally, what the Examiner refers to as a ring-like portion 20 in Biedermann et al. does not include a structure comparable to Applicant's collar (23) which forms part of Applicant's ring (20). To the extent that Applicant has a structure comparable to the function performed by Biedermann et al.'s threaded screw socket 45, it would be Applicant's clip (8) which as seen in Figure 1 engages connecting rod (10). For these reasons, Applicant submits that although the claimed structure has certain elements in common with Biedermann et al., it includes other elements which do not exist in Biedermann et al. For this reason, Applicant submits that the rejection of Claims 1-3 and 6 under 35 USC 102(b) is not proper.

Marnay et al. teaches a ring with a collar. However, Marnay et al.'s ring does not have a screw-threaded socket. Further, even if the ring 45 of Biedermann et al. were provided with a collar as taught by Marnay et al., such structure while arguably similar to Applicant's clip (8) is not similar to the claimed ring (20) and socket (21) and, therefore, the combination of Biedermann et al. and Marnay et al. does not yield the invention as set forth in Claim 1. The remaining reference Puno et al. also does not provide the structure missing from Biedermann et

al. and Marnay et al. and, therefore, its added teaching does not yield the invention as set forth in Claim 1.

Since the remaining claims depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, Applicant submits that all of the claims pending for examination, namely Claims 1-9 are all in condition for allowance, which early action is requested.

If there are any fees due in connection with the filing of this response, please charge those fees to our Deposit Account No. 02-2666. If a telephone interview would expedite the prosecution of this Application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (310) 207-3800.

PETITION FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Per 37 C.F.R. 1.136(a) and in connection with the Office Action mailed on August 2, 2006, Applicant respectfully petitions Commissioner for a three (3) month extension of time, extending the period for response to February 2, 2007. Attached is a check in the amount of \$510 to cover the petition filing fee for a 37 C.F.R. 1.17(a)(3) small entity. A duplicate copy of this sheet is enclosed.

Respectfully submitted,

BLAKELY, SOKOLOFF, TAYLOR, & ZAFMAN

Dated:

1/31/07

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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class Mail , With Sufficient Postage, In An Envelope Addressed To: Mail Stop AF, Commissioner For Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450


Linda Marie Metz

1/31/07
January 31, 2007